

Remarks

Further and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Thus, the claims have been amended as suggested by the Examiner on page 2 of the Office Action, except that instead of amending claims 2 and 3, these claims have been cancelled. Such amendments render the claims objections moot.

Further amendments have been made in the claims to overcome the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112. To the extent these rejections are maintained, they are respectfully traversed.

(1) Regarding "pulp-shaped fiber" in claims 1, 3, 6, 10 and 11, Applicants restricted this to one selected from the group consisting of wood pulp, non-wood pulp and fibrillated synthetic fiber. The basis for this can be found in paragraph [0041] of the specification.

(2) Regarding claims 2 and 3, as indicated above they have been deleted.

(3) Regarding claim 5, it has been amended to clarify its meaning.

(4) Regarding claim 7, the thermally adhesive fiber is now set forth in the beginning of claim 7.

(5) Regarding claim 10, it has been amended to clarify that the water having a specified cation concentration is used to make the aqueous slurry and the paper.

(6) Regarding claim 11, it has been amended to define that paper is impregnated with aqueous liquid, not that aqueous liquid is impregnated with paper.

By the way, Applicants cannot understand why the Examiner refers to "recycled paper" in the rejection of claim 11. The present invention has no relation to recycled paper.

The patentability of the presently claimed invention over the disclosures of the references relied upon by the Examiner in rejecting the claims will be apparent upon consideration of the following remarks.

Thus, all of the prior art rejections, as set forth on pages 5-10 of the Office Action, are respectfully traversed.

The present invention aims to provide moisture absorptive and desorptive paper having high moisture absorptive and desorptive properties and high dimensional stability. Please see paragraph [0005] of the specification.

The organic fine particles having a cross-linking structure and acidic groups have high moisture absorptive and desorptive properties, but a disadvantage that changes in size happen by moisture absorption and desorption, which leads to dimensional instability of the moisture absorptive and desorptive paper. According to the present invention, this disadvantage is overcome by using inorganic fiber as an essential component of the moisture absorptive and desorptive paper. Please see paragraph [0040] of the specification.

Particular attention in this regard is directed to new claim 12 defining specific contents of organic fine particles, inorganic fiber, and pulp-shaped fiber which are suitable for achieving both high moisture absorptive and desorptive properties and high dimensional stability. Please see paragraph [0042] of the specification.

Contrary to the present invention, Belding et al. do not disclose improvement of dimensional stability of the moisture absorptive and desorptive paper, and thus, never recognize dimensional instability as a problem to be solved. Also, although Belding et al. disclose an inorganic fiber as a component of the moisture absorptive and desorptive paper, the inorganic fiber is not an essential component, and in fact, Belding et al. describe that the use of the inorganic fiber is not suitable. Please see column 7, lines 29-31 of this reference. This clearly teaches away the present invention. Further, Belding et al. do not describe in what cases the inorganic fiber may be used.

Nishida (all three references) and Tanaka et al. disclose impregnating paper with "organic fine particles having cross-linking structure and acidic group", but they never recognize that these particles change in size by moisture absorption and desorption, and that this change leads to dimensional instability of the moisture absorptive and desorptive paper. Also, they never disclose using an inorganic fiber as a component of the paper.

As is clear from the above explanations, none of the applied references provide motivation to use an inorganic fiber as a component of the moisture absorptive and desorptive paper. Considering the fact that a great number of constitutions of the moisture absorptive and desorptive paper can be conceived from the combination of these three documents, those skilled in the art would not be led to the specific constitution of the moisture absorptive and desorptive paper which comprises an inorganic fiber as an essential component without some motivation to do so. Rather, those skilled in the art would avoid the use of inorganic fiber, considering the above disclosure of Belding et al. that the use of inorganic fiber is not suitable.

For these reasons, Applicants take the position that the prior art rejections should be withdrawn.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is submitted that each of the grounds of objection and rejection set forth by the Examiner has been overcome, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such allowance is solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or to credit any overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 23-0975, with the EXCEPTION of deficiencies in fees for multiple dependent claims in new applications.

Respectfully submitted,

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